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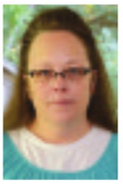


1 Kentucky's new governor ordered county clerks' names removed from state marriage license forms at the center of a controversy involving Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis, who was jailed after refusing to issue licenses to gay couples. Gov. Matt Bevin had said after his election in November that he would change the forms that had drawn objections from Davis and some other clerks. REUTERS

ANTI-GUN-VIOLENCE TV AD

2 The National Basketball Association and some of its top players take aim at ending gun violence in a television campaign that will launch on Christmas, the league said Wednesday. In a partnership with Everytown for Gun Safety, the anti-violence group founded and funded by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the NBA on Friday will begin running a public service announcement during games broadcast on ABC and ESPN that urges a stop to gun violence, the league said. REUTERS

OBAMA, SEINFELD DRIVE

3 President Barack Obama will make an appearance in Jerry Seinfeld's "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee" on Dec. 30. In a promotional video for the Web series' seventh season, Seinfeld pulls up to the South Lawn of the White House in a Corvette 1963 Corvette Stingray Split Window Coupe. REUTERS

UNION SQUARE HOLIDAY MARKET

7 A view from above the Union Square Holiday Market as shoppers search for last-minute gifts in New York City on Wednesday evening.

7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

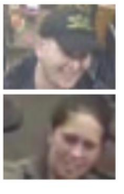
SYRIA TO JOIN UN TALKS

4 A close adviser to Syrian President Bashar al Assad said Damascus was ready to join U.N.-sponsored peace talks, with its position bolstered by both Russian backing and the West's retreat from a hardline anti-Assad approach. Bouthaina Shaaban said her government approved of U.N. resolutions passed last week endorsing an international road map for a Syria peace process. REUTERS

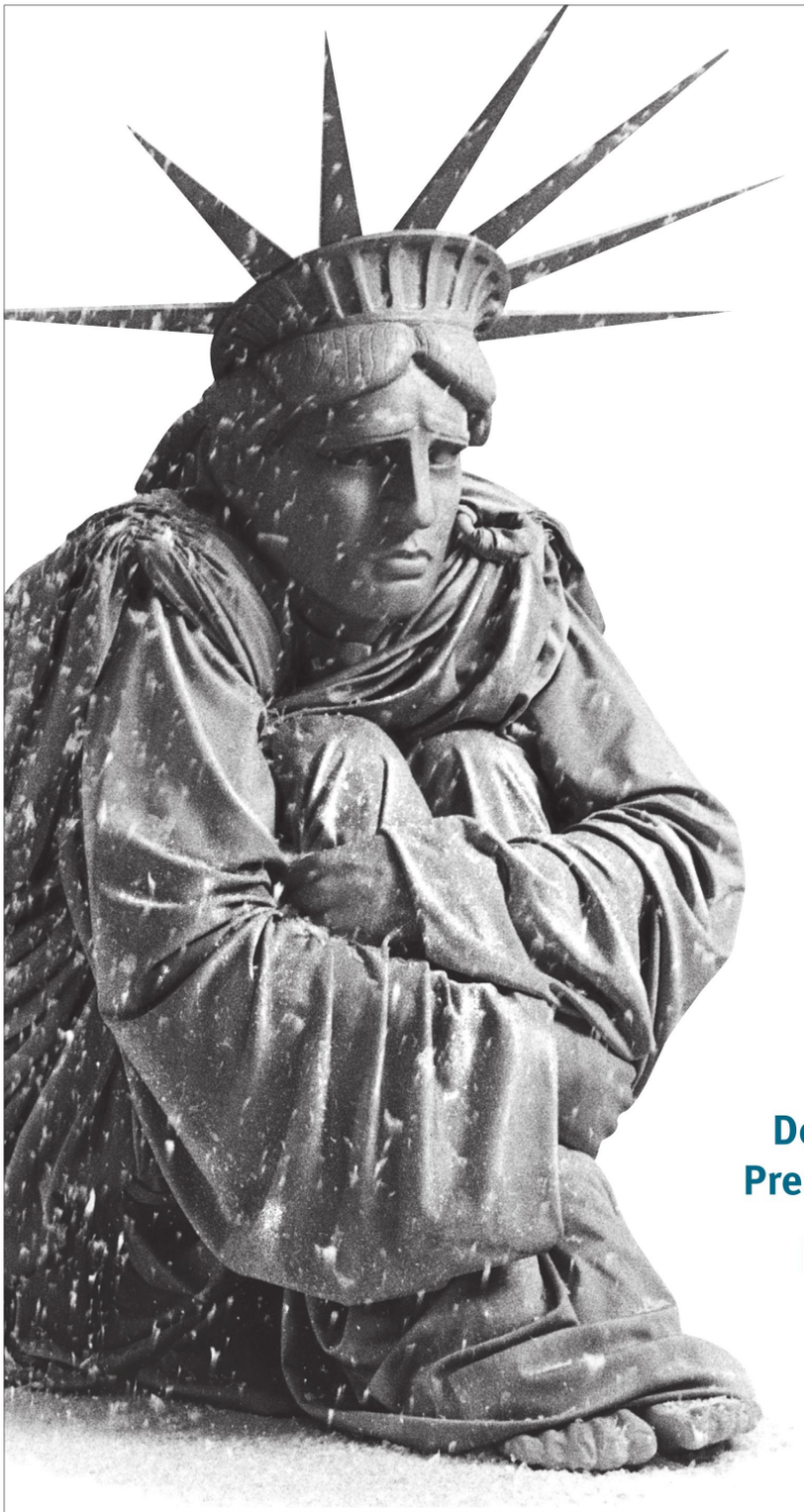
HACKER STOLE SCRIPTS

5 A man was arrested Monday in Manhattan for allegedly hacking into numerous celebrities' accounts and stealing scripts, personal information and private sex tapes. Alonzo Knowles, 23, faces charges of copyright infringement and identity theft, NBC reported, adding that Knowles was allegedly attempting to sell stolen material to an undercover agent at the time of his arrest. JASON NUCKOLLS

KNIFEPOINT ROBBERY



6 A little bit of cash and a single pack of cigarettes together sound like a lousy reason to commit a felony, but cops say two people did just that. The NYPD is searching for two suspects, one male and one female, following a robbery at knifepoint at a convenience store at 230 E. 80th St. The incident occurred shortly after 9 p.m. on Dec. 15. JOSH KRUGER



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Genuine Liquorette PROVIDED

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2015's top food trends

We sure had a lot of fun this year.

EVA KIS
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This year has been a wild foodie ride, mostly fueled by fried chicken and veggie burgers. Whatever the project, there was plenty of room for quirky ideas and chefs who turned their passion into ours. Here are the top 5 trends that grabbed headlines in 2015.

Cocktail culture broadens its horizons

Pegu Club alum Kenta Goto's **Bar Goto** introduced us to Japanese cocktails like the sakura martini — complete with floating bloom — and served them with several varieties of okonomiyaki. Summer's preppiest poolside bar **Oleanders** gave a "Grease" vibe to the McCarren Hotel and resurrected a whole menu of cocktails lost to the late '70s. At **Genuine Liquorette**, if you learn the house rules (and a little bit about how to actually make a balanced cocktail), you can impress your friends by getting behind the bar. And the Will Ferrell-themed **Stay Classy, New York** reminded us that a great cocktail is not always about fancy locavore ingredients — sometimes, an inspired pun will do.

Vegetarian fare wins over meat eaters

By Chloe has been so successful with vegan takes on comfort eats like mac and cheese that it's expanding to a second location next year. Former Del Posto pastry chef Brooks Headley made veggie burgers so unbelievable that The New York Times sent Pete Wells to verify them — **Superiority Burger** walked away with two stars. In the East Village, **Avant Garden** is quietly wowing diners with housemade tofu and mushrooms. When's the last time you were excited about mushrooms?

Reimagining ice cream

The must-have dessert of summer was **10Below**'s Thai-style ice cream roll-ups, which spawned hour-plus lines in Chinatown. At **Babu Ji** in Alphabet City, they may as well have opened up a window just to sell the lauded take on kulfi, a densely rich ice cream pop common in India. And **-321 Ice Cream Shop** brought the liquid nitrogen craze to Brooklyn, taking it way beyond Dippin' Dots for flash-frozen treats in flavors like green tea Kit-Kat.

Single-concept restaurants rule

BEC caused a stir early in the year with its all-breakfast sandwich concept. By the time David Chang turned the original Momofuku Noodle Bar space into the fried chicken sandwich emporium **Fuku** over the summer, we were left wondering where it had been all our lives. Most recently, **Arepa Factory** took the standard corn-and-cheese sandwich back to its Venezuelan roots.

Korean barbecue gets an upgrade

Two chefs from Gramercy Tavern and Bouley created the instant hit Oiji, which serves cheap eats that get to the street-food-loving heart of Seoul for cheap but satisfying eats like the honey-cayenne potato chips. Though **Kang Ho Dong Baekjeong** opened just before the official start of 2015, it's been drawing celebrity chefs and locals alike for the high quality, unique cuts of meat hitting its tabletop grills. In Gowanus is the highly anticipated newcomer **Insa**, where what's on the plate is sustainable and seasonal, and the microphones in the karaoke lounge are hot.

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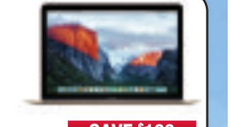

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FDA STILL DISCRIMINATING AGAINST GAY MEN

ERNEST OWENS

The Ernest Opinion

Award-winning multimedia journalist Ernest Owens is a keen observer of social, LGBT and race issues in Philadelphia.

You can reach Ernest by email, theernestopinion @ gmail.com, or through his Twitter handle, @MrErnestOwens.

The FDA says gay men must abstain from sex for one year in order to donate blood. ISTOCK

I will never forget my initial first-hand encounter with institutional gay discrimination: when I was a college freshman trying to donate blood.

I answered every question on the intake sheet with a "no," until I got to the one that asked if I had had recent sexual intercourse with another man.

My answer — yes — excluded me. I learned that I didn't have the opportunity to save another life — black, white, old or disabled — in the same way my straight peers could.

The embarrassment and discomfort I felt when I had to step out of the line made me feel subhuman. All my life, I took pride in being a civic servant — one who could offer service to those who needed my help. The FDA in that moment put a bigoted shadow over that "S" that once beamed over my superhero chest.

The rejection was an implication that men like myself could endanger the lives of others because of our sexual orientation. Because in the FDA's narrow mind, HIV today still feels like HIV in 1985 — when in fact it's the government's perpetuation of the stigma that is stuck in the past.

This week the FDA acted as though it changed its ways, when in fact it only half-assed them.

The FDA decided gay men could donate blood 12 months after their last sexual contact with another man. This overturned the 30-year ban on gay men taking part in donations at all.

But unless you are a closeted priest, asexual or living under a rock, the bulk of gay men who are regularly sexual active still will not be able to donate.

I still won't be able to. I'm 24 and in a healthy, committed relationship. I shouldn't have to sacrifice sex for a year in order to help save a few lives.

What the FDA decided isn't revolutionary or progressive, but rooted in homophobia. It passes judgment on personal behavior. The FDA allows gays to donate blood like straight people — as long as they don't have sex. It's absurd.

I shouldn't have to abstain from normal human behavior in order to qualify to donate blood that could save a life that most likely isn't as gay as mine.

HIV in America isn't the mystery or death sentence it was 30 years ago. The FDA should recognize that progress in medicine and society by not treating gay men as pariahs.

My tax dollars shouldn't fund governments that suggest the red of my blood isn't as desirable as the green of my dollar.

Moments like this should remind the rest of the nation that equality for LGBTQ Americans wasn't achieved when the right to marry became the law of the land. The fight must continue against institutional policies from like those of the FDA that treat us as second-class citizens.

Thank you, but no thank you, FDA. This new policy is a slap to all of those in medicine and society who have reduced the threat of HIV only to have its stigma reinforced by your discriminatory policies.

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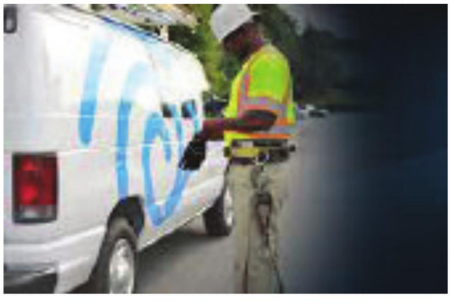

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7 New York Holiday, December 24-27, 2015

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BRIEFS

Queens subway rider stabbed 4 times in the butt: NYPD

Police are asking for the public's help in identifying and locating a suspect wanted for stabbing a man multiple times on the butt at a Queens subway station.

On Monday at 7:10 p.m. the victim, a 42-year-old man, was standing on the Queens-bound F train platform at the 71-Continental Av-Forest Hills station when he felt the suspect bump into him from behind with an unknown hard object, cops said.

The suspect then bumped into the man a second time – also with an unknown object— as he was getting on the train. When the man exited the train at the Kew Gardens-Union Turnpike station, the suspect followed and bumped into the man two more times before the victim was able to walk away.

Once the victim arrived at home, he discovered that he had been stabbed four times on his buttocks, according to police. He was taken to Forest Hills Hospital, where he was treated and released.

The suspect is described as a 25-year-old black man with a cast on his right hand, standing 6 feet tall and weighing 220 pounds. He was last seen wearing a multicolored jacket, Oakland Raiders shirt, and black and tan pants. ANGY ALTAMIRANO

COURTESY OF NYPD

Brooklyn teacher pleads guilty, gets five years for sex-related offenses

On Tuesday, a disgraced former high school teacher pleaded guilty to various sex-related offenses and was sentenced to five years in prison.

Sean Shaynak, a former math and science teacher at Brooklyn Technical High School, was facing a 36-count indictment when he pleaded guilty to kidnapping, disseminating indecent material to a minor, endangering the welfare of a child and official misconduct, Gothamist reported, adding that he stood accused of abusing seven girls ranging in age from 14 to 18.

"This guilty plea spares the young victims from having to testify publicly at trial and in graphic detail," said Oren Yaniv, a Brooklyn DA spokesman, in a statement quoted by Gothamist.

Allegations again Shaynak include taking a teen to a nude beach and getting her drunk, going to an out-of-state sex club where a student watched Shaynak engage in sex acts and sending nude photos of himself to students, the New York Daily News added in a related report. JASON NUCKOLLS

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December 25-28

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F Jamaica-bound trains skip 169 St
M Service is extended to the Chambers St J Station
N Astoria-bound trains run via the Q from DeKalb Av to Canal St
R Forest Hills-bound trains run via the Q from DeKalb Av to Canal St
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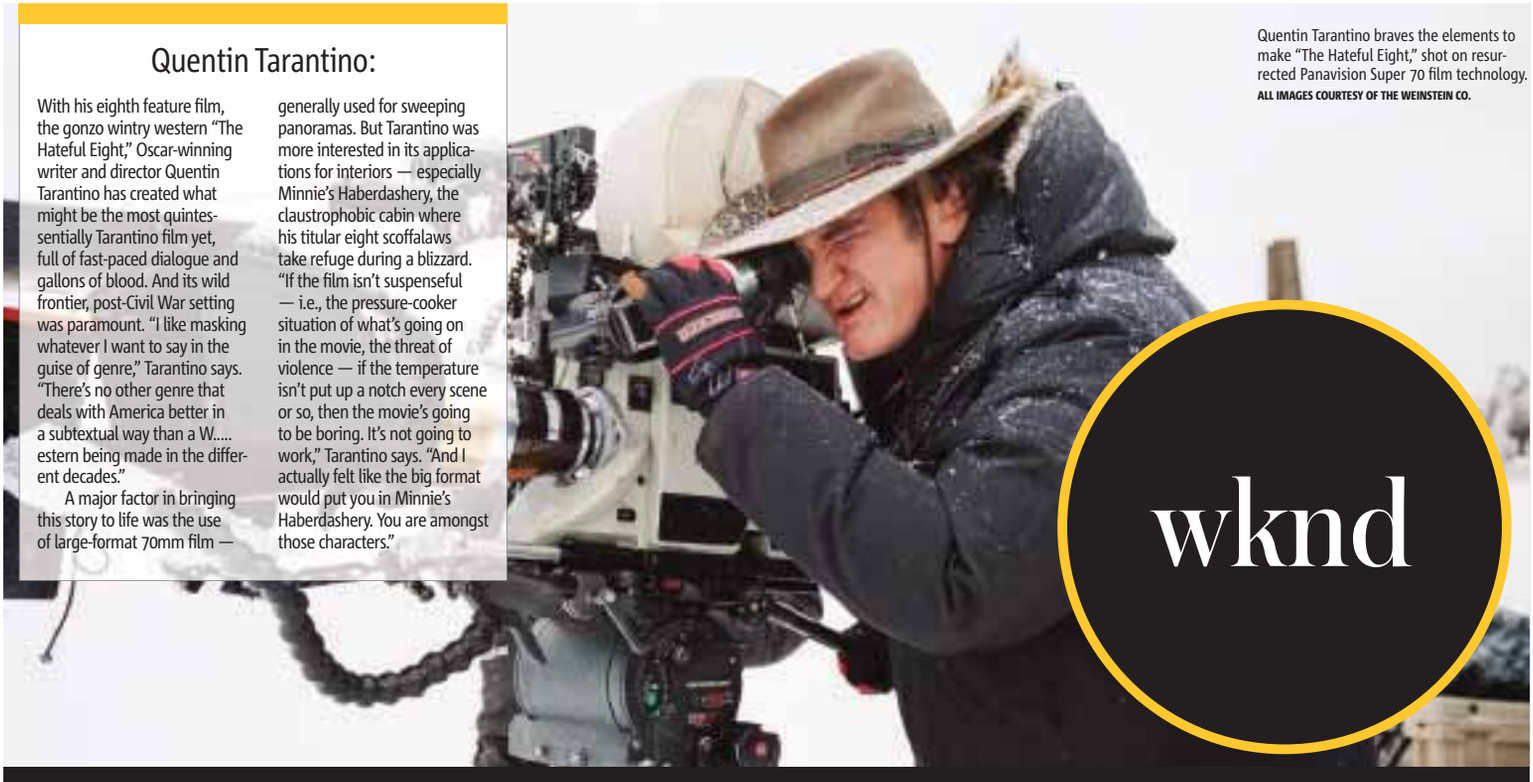
Quentin Tarantino:

With his eighth feature film, the gonzo wintry western "The Hateful Eight," Oscar-winning writer and director Quentin Tarantino has created what might be the most quintessentially Tarantino film yet, full of fast-paced dialogue and gallons of blood. And its wild frontier, post-Civil War setting was paramount. "I like masking whatever I want to say in the guise of genre," Tarantino says. "There's no other genre that deals with America better in a subtextual way than a W..... estern being made in the different decades."

A major factor in bringing this story to life was the use of large-format 70mm film — generally used for sweeping panoramas. But Tarantino was more interested in its applications for interiors — especially Minnie's Haberdashery, the claustrophobic cabin where his titular eight scoffalaws take refuge during a blizzard. "If the film isn't suspenseful — i.e., the pressure-cooker situation of what's going on in the movie, the threat of violence — if the temperature isn't put up a notch every scene or so, then the movie's going to be boring. It's not going to work," Tarantino says. "And I actually felt like the big format would put you in Minnie's Haberdashery. You are amongst those characters."



Quentin Tarantino braves the elements to make "The Hateful Eight," shot on resurrected Panavision Super 70 film technology.
ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE WEINSTEIN CO.

Fighting words from 'The Hateful Eight'

The stars of Quentin Tarantino's bloody new Western speak. NED EHRBAR

SAMUEL L. JACKSON (MAJ. MARQUIS WARREN):

"Quentin and I have conversations about what I say, and I don't just willy-nilly change things," Jackson, who has appeared in almost all of Tarantino's films, says of the filmmaker's dialogue. "If I want to say something else I'll go to him and we'll talk about it, and he'll say, 'OK' or he'll say, 'No, leave it the way I wrote it.' The rest of these motherf—ers have to say exactly what he wrote.'"

KURT RUSSELL (JOHN RUTH):

Russell joined the project when it was a simple staged script reading in Los Angeles, and he was hooked early. "When I found out we were going to be doing this at a theater with 1,600 seats for charity. I thought, 'OK, this is good,'" Russell says. "It was kind of special. There was a lot of energy in the theater. People were excited."

DEMIAN BICHIR (BOB):

"I just had the best seat in the house from Day One," Bichir says of teaming up with the director. "You need a crazy director, a free director, a director who's not afraid of taking risks to help get you where you want to go."

JENNIFER JASON LEIGH (DAISY DOMERGUE):

Tarantino knows that some people have a problem with how Leigh's ruthless criminal character is treated, but he's not listening. "I'm sure some people might be uncomfortable about the violence that is handed out to Jennifer's character," Tarantino says. "The way this story works is I have trapped these characters, and anything can happen to them. What? I'm going to make it that for seven of these characters anything can happen to them, but when it comes to this eighth character, I have to protect her because she's a woman? No, I'm not going to think like that."

WALTON GOGGINS (CHRIS MANNIX):

"From an actor's perspective, this is like panning for gold in the Gold Rush days in California," the "Justified" star says of getting to speak Tarantino's dialogue. "I read this stuff 300 times to make sure I had it known, and there was one day where Quentin gave me a monologue, a whole page of Quentin Tarantino dialogue to do later that day. It just freaked me out and brought me down. I was like, 'F—, I don't f—ing have this.' And that night it was the last thing that we shot, and even then I'm just freaking out, and Quentin looks at me and goes, 'You got this.'"

BRUCE DERN (GEN. SANDY SMITHERS):

"This is the first movie I've ever done where I felt privileged to lend a hand," Dern says of working with Tarantino. "He expects people to do what he hired them to do and not act and be somebody else. Everybody on the set knows you have a chance to go to the playoffs. But what you don't know is that you're going to end up with an opera. I mean, I couldn't sit through a f—ing opera, but ..."

TIM ROTH (OSWALDO MOBRAY):

"It was kind of a weird sensation to be one of the old boys coming in. And I've had a long break, as I haven't been back since 'Pulp Fiction' or 'Four Rooms,'" Roth says. "So I didn't know the new version of how he filmed, and the kind of atmosphere on set that he encouraged. It was all brand new for me, so it was almost in a sense like coming to Quentin fresh again."

MICHAEL MADSEN (JOE GAGE):

"At least Tim Roth and I didn't get stuck together this time," Madsen says of reteaming with his old co-star. "Tim and I embraced each other on the set of 'Reservoir Dogs' and we both had so much fake blood on our bodies that we were stuck together. We were stuck together, like, more than we wanted to be. It was like the hug that lasted a little too long, and they actually had to use a garden hose to separate us."

Charlotte Rampling isn't that scary

The legendary actress digs into dark feelings in her new marriage drama "45 Years."

MATT PRIGGE
@mattprigge
matt.prigge@metro.us

Charlotte Rampling plays a woman who quietly falls apart when she learns her longtime husband (Tom Courtenay) still has powerful feelings for an old, deceased lover in "45 Years." SUNDANCE SELECTS

GETTY IMAGES

When meeting Charlotte Rampling, we don't get "the look" — that sharp-eyed, freezing gaze that is as iconic as those wielded by Garbo or Dietrich. We're slightly surprised to find the noted screen ice queen friendly, gabby and prone to full-bodied laughter, even when speaking about a brutally honest and very human film about a possibly crumbling relationship. In "45 Years," she and Tom Courtenay play a couple who discover a shocking secret soon before their 45th anniversary. We wonder how she'll react to the news that he's still pining for a girlfriend who died 50 years prior, in a performance that has netted the acclaimed actress, now 69, several accolades and counting.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but this is one of the most vulnerable roles you've played.
The vulnerability has always been there, but people have just used me on other registers. This has always been there, even if I come across as a bit scary sometimes. [Laughs] Underneath there's a good quivering mass that can be used.

Writer-director Andrew Haigh is in his 40s writing about characters in their 60s and 70s. What is it like working with someone making a film about characters older than he is?
I find with creative people, they're not wrong. Somehow, they know. They know things they have no right to know because they haven't actually lived. But the creative gift is there.

With this you would do multiple takes to get deeper and deeper into the scenes. Do you like when directors do lots of takes?
You have directors like Kubrick, who did 75 takes once. That's not all the time he does that. That, I suppose, comes from insecurity, of wanting to imagine so many different possibilities. Lots of directors do many, many takes and just exhaust the actors. [She mock-slouches in her chair, as though drained of life.] They think that's good.

Woody Allen is known for not doing a ton of takes, sometimes leaving his actors wondering if they're doing a good job. What were your experiences like with him on 1980's "Stardust Memories"?
I think mine was particular. He was in a particular stage in his life, and he was really quite happy, so we had a really good relationship. He was in between relationships, so he was in a really good mood. Obviously, that's changed. But that was a really good time for him.

Back to "45 Years." It flies in the face of the idea that relationships get easier with age, or that older people don't suffer the same neuroses that plague younger people.
Look at how Tom reacts: like a little boy again — a teenager hankering over his little girlfriend. It's exactly the same thing. Feelings are the most powerful things. Feelings can kill us. And it can be over something very, very small. They remind us of other things that hugely upset us in our lives. Maybe someone else did that to [Kate]— she was abandoned, maybe. Those feelings ping again. Feelings, they certainly don't age. They never — thank God — go away. Whatever happens till we die, we're always going to be overpowered with feelings — let's hope. It means we're alive.

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'THE HATEFUL EIGHT'

Kurt Russell and Jennifer Jason Leigh annoy Bruce Dern. THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

Director: Quentin Tarantino
Stars: Samuel L. Jackson, Jennifer Jason Leigh
Rating: R

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The longest Quentin Tarantino film is also the slowest and the nastiest and the one that's hardest to defend. As promised, an octet of ne'er-do-wells — including Samuel L. Jackson's bounty hunter, Kurt Russell's other bounty hunter and Jennifer Jason Leigh's nearly feral outlaw — congregates in a Wyoming shack, mid-blizzard. They came to talk, but gabbing soon turns to bickering, epithets and, very eventually, ultraviolence.

It's impressive how glacially "Eight" moves, giving you plenty of space to suss out what Tarantino is doing. Yet his eighth film still proves hard to pin down. Is its escalating procession of offensiveness — racist, homophobic, sexist — actually offensive or a commentary on the same?

We'd argue the latter, though it's still a tough sell. There's an agenda there, and not one as evil as it sometimes seems. What you get is an absurdist view of a world where all the good have been (gorily) dispatched, leaving baddies acting on their basest needs and prejudices. Its final act is so shocking, so messed up and so wrong that only the world's worst person would see it as a triumph. But it's not nihilistic. And it's not wrong. **MATT PRIGGE**

'CONCUSSION'

Alec Baldwin and Will Smith get serious in "Concussion." COLUMBIA PICTURES

Director: Peter Landesman
Stars: Will Smith, Gugu Mbatha-Raw
Rating: PG-13

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It's almost touching how much "Concussion" is a relic. It's an issue drama released wide at a time when most big movies are outsize franchise entries. But perhaps more important is how po-faced and earnest it is. This year has seen movies (like "The Big Short," about the 2008 economic crash) questioning how we communicate important intel to the masses and actually, hopefully reach them and effect change. "The Big Short" was a comedy; this is square and, some comic relief by Albert Brooks as a grouchy hospital director aside, humorless.

Its topic is the real-life tale of how kindly Nigeria-born pathologist Bennet Omalu (Will Smith) fought the NFL to expose research suggesting many players were suffering from a severe form of brain damage. "Concussion" doesn't sugarcoat his findings, but it also knows the NFL, which only belatedly acknowledged Omalu's studies in 2009, is powerful. And so it has to make a flimsy and half-hearted attempt to praise the game as "beautiful" and other such adjectives. It's like if another whistleblower movie, "The Insider," ended with Russell Crowe's Jeffrey Wigand saying cigarettes aren't that bad. **MP**

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'DADDY'S HOME'

"Daddy's Home" is not another "The Other Guys." WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Director: Sean Anders
Stars: Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg
Rating: PG-13

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There's an ocean of difference between the Will Ferrell entries directed by his equally out-there director, Adam McKay — "Anchorman," "Step Brothers" — and the Ferrells only produced by him. Quality control always slips when McKay's not in charge. One of those, "Daddy's Home," depicts the pissing contest between Ferrell's lame suburbanite Brad and Mark Wahlberg's aging bad boy Dusty, the father of Brad's wife's two kids.

Wahlberg and Ferrell were an inspired outside-the-box duo in the inspired, McKay-helmed "The Other Guys." This is more shambling and spotty. Big set pieces, like Brad trying to mount Dusty's bike, fall miserably flat. Sojourns to Brad's predictably lame job — a smooth jazz station, of course — do not, especially as they boast reliable scene-stealer Thomas Haden Church. Actively schizo, it veers drunkenly in quality. Call it a mostly harmless draw. **MP**

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'JOY'

Jennifer Lawrence is too young for "Joy," but oh well. MERIE WEISMILLER WALLACE

Director: David O. Russell
Stars: Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro
Rating: PG-13

●●●●●

As recently as six years ago, David O. Russell was the unjustly disgraced filmmaker of "I Heart Huckabees." Now he's threatening to outstay his comeback. "Joy" is more of what was seen in "Silver Linings Playbook" and "American Hustle," a freewheeling portrait of multiple maniacs, though the first that's a full-on Jennifer Lawrence vehicle. She's far too young — but, whatever — to play Joy Mangano, the single mom-turned-Miracle Mop inventor who had to scrabble hard to get her invention into a legion of QVC watchers' hands, then scrabble harder to keep her company afloat.

"Joy" is more modest and focused than either "Hustle" or "Playbook" though, with one of Russell's best stretches: a tour through the QVC HQ that breaks down how a busy institution works. The rest vacillates between slightly pandering female empowerment and a cockeyed view of small businesses being just as venal and shady as their big-time counterparts. By the time Lawrence's Joy has gone from ball of nerves to almost reciting Michael Corleone in "The Godfather," it's become darker than it lets on. **MP**

'THE REVENANT'

Leonardo DiCaprio goes feral in "The Revenant." TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

Director: Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu
Stars: Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hardy
Rating: R

●●●●●

"The Revenant" is a harsh film that was hard to make, and it never wants you, over its 156 minutes, to forget it. If filmmaking can be macho, here it is at its man-manliest. It took 10 years to make, nearly a year of that to shoot. It boasts a serious former "Tiger Beat" staple who wants his Oscar already, namely Leonardo DiCaprio as a fur trapper after an epic CGI bear-maul, trying to get back to civilization and wreak vengeance on the man who left him for dead (Tom Hardy).

"The Revenant" might have even gotten away with it by being less: having a shorter running time and fewer look-at-this-sweat powerhouse shots, or being completely stripped down to a minimalist nub. It might have also, conversely, been better as more, with a storyline that's not just a thin tale of survival and revenge ending in a fat, indifferent anticlimax. It even has a look-at-me-ma final shot of ambiguity, though there's really only one way to read it: as cast and crew staring you down and asking, "Are you not entertained?" **MP**

'WHERE TO INVADE NEXT'

Michael Moore heads abroad in "Where to Invade Next." MICHAEL MOORE

Director: Michael Moore
Genre: Documentary
Rating: R

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Michael Moore's first doc in six years is a return to his more modest, and arguably more exacting, early days, like "TV Nation" and "The Awful Truth." Back then, he'd hammer away at tiny injustices rather than ones perhaps too big for him, like gun control, health care and George W. Bush. Here he globetrots, picking out social services done better elsewhere than here: copious vacation time in Italy, lavish school lunches in France, free women's health clinics in Tunisia. It's a utopian thought experiment, wherein we get to imagine a country that cares more for the happiness of its denizens. It's still a little overly simplified, but its charm and optimism are hard to resist. **MP**

'45 YEARS'

Tom Courtenay and Charlotte Rampling star in "45 Years." SUNDANCE SELECTS

Director: Andrew Haigh
Stars: Charlotte Rampling, Tom Courtenay
Rating: R

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Just because they've been together for four and a half decades doesn't mean marriage is any easier. Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay play Kate and Geoff, who are hit with news soon before an anniversary party: Someone has found the body of one of Geoff's ex-girlfriends. He's suddenly thinking about the love that could not be, while Kate realizes she may have been no more than his backup choice. As in "Weekend," director Andrew Haigh gives his actors room to find the nuances between lines. They reward him with deeply felt performances that don't always need dialogue to signify all that's bubbling underneath their very English reticence. **MP**

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WHERE TO EAT, DRINK & PLAY

A great end to 2015

You know to leave Times Square to the tourists, and we've got five better ways to greet the New Year. EVA KIS

Dance on Pier 94
$175, 711 12th Ave.

If the only thing you want every night of the year is a dance floor, then head to the Hudson riverside, where a DJ will definitely save your life. Travis Scott, fresh off touring with The Weeknd, headlines the all-night concert along with EDM mixmasters The Chainsmokers, plus Nicky Romero and rising Brooklyn talent Ansolo. Between sets, hydrate with drinks from the four-hour open bar through midnight.

NYE on Coney Island
Free, Steeplechase Pavilion

Thanks to El Nino, the weather is much better for the second year of Coney Island's nostalgic seaside celebration, complete with its own digital ball drop on the Parachute Jump, romantic rides on Deno's Wonder Wheel (the Thunderbolt, B&B Carousell and Abe Stark Skating Rink will be open too, all free), plus sideshow performers, live music and fireworks at midnight. The fun begins at 9 p.m. — maybe even stick around for a not-so-Arctic edition of the Polar Bear Club's NYE swim?

All-American New Year's Eve Ball
$25, 2085A Pacific St., Brooklyn

Couldn't we all use a little more unity? The residents of 2085A decided to be the change they want to see in the world by opening their building to host the ultimate house party. Find a wine bar and hookah lounge on the ground floor; a signature cocktail called Dear White People as well as finger foods on the second floor; and a dance hall with a tequila bar on the third floor, or watch the fireworks from the roof.

Tomorrow Never Dies
$155+, 235 W. 46th St.

"Queen of the Night" switches themes for this Bond-inspired immersive theater party, in which the spy has to foil a kidnapping of Britain's reigning monarch. The mystery begins at 9:30 p.m., and Mr. Shaken-Not-Stirred would approve of the five-hour open bar until 2:30 a.m. (Yes, you can get more than martinis.) Adding to the fun: performances by the cast, DJs and a daring rescue by midnight. Dress your gentleman spy/femme fatale best.

Aloha New Year's Eve
Free, 333 Douglass St.

If the record high temperatures last until the end, make the best of it at Threes Brewing's Hawaiian-themed bash beginning at 10 p.m. There's no cover charge, so the only thing that will cost you is the tiki cocktails. Dig out some tropical shirts and clamdiggers (if you've even bothered to put them away) and check out DJ Dirty Boogie mashing up surf rock and hip-hop, take a souvenir pic in the photobooth, toast at midnight with Champagne, then dance until your flippy-floppies break.

Listings

Mission Chinese Food EVA KIS

FOOD

Breakfast at Mission Chinese
Dec. 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
171 East Broadway
Twitter.com/Missionstfood
Chef Danny Bowien doubles down on his anything-goes philosophy with the launch of a new breakfast menu. On the dim sum cart will be unusual options like mapo tofu and scrambled egg-and-tapioca dumplings. On the bagel cart are Black Seed's Montreal-style rounds, which will be baked in-house in the oven that usually handles MCF's wood-fired pizza, with chopped liver and a collaboration whitefish salad. They're not taking reservations, so open those stockings early to get there in time for brunch, which will continue on weekends. EVA KIS

COMEDY

Christmas for the Jews
Dec. 24, 8-10 p.m.
City Winery, 155 Varick St.
$30-$35, Citywinery.com
What's a poor lonely Jew to do while friends are celebrating Jesus and Santa Claus on Christmas Eve? Go see a comedy show, of course. This 90-minute set of sketches pokes fun at the holidays and Jewish traditions, led by Joel Chasnoff, Lenny Marcus, Gary Vider and Moody McCarthy.

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

Good Riddance Day
Dec. 28, noon-1 p.m.
Times Square
Free, Shredit.com
Some things are better forgotten, but if you need a little help letting go, there's Good Riddance Day. Inspired by the Latin American tradition of burning bad-luck tokens before the New Year, Times Square is hosting Shred-It's "destruction services" to help you start 2016 with a clean slate. Share your terrible memories in a group catharsis, then put them on paper and send them on a satisfying trip through the shredder.

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Dec. 30 & 31, 8:30 & 9 p.m.
Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave.
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Snowtime in Quebec City

You'd have a hard time finding a city that celebrates winter more than Quebec City. From first snowfall to springtime thaw, it's excitement all the way.

Its historic French architecture, fabulous restaurants and spoken French give the city a European-style charm unique in North America, but it's truly Canadian in many ways too — particularly when it comes to having fun when the temps go below freezing.

Toboggan on the Terrace

Topping the long list of winter-only attractions is the incredible toboggan run that swoops down to the historic Dufferin Terrace boardwalk in the heart of the city. Installed in 1884, it offers the chance to hurtle down at speeds of up to 50 mph aboard toboggans that can carry up to four passengers each (Au1884.ca/en). Throughout the winter there's ice skating on outdoor rinks, horse-drawn carriage rides, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing on trails in city parks, and spectacular views of the icy St. Lawrence River.

Carnival time

Forget images of scantily clad revelers under the Rio sun! Bundle up and experience one of the biggest and best winter carnivals in the world (Carnaval.qc.ca), from Jan. 29 to Feb. 14. It's centered on a huge Ice Palace on Place de l'Assemblee-Nationale, but celebrations occupy a dozen or so city streets and squares. There are colorful after-dark parades with live music and dancing, an international ice sculpture competition and some just plain silly stuff, like stripping down to a swimsuit and taking a bath in the snow. On the St. Lawrence River, 50 teams from Canada, the U.S. and France compete in an exciting ice-canoe race.

Ice hotel

Accommodations in the city range from cozy bed-and-breakfasts in historic homes to the iconic Château Frontenac to a spectacularly converted 17th-century monastery with luxury spa and a mission to promote wellness (Monastere.ca). But there's one option you won't find anywhere else in North America: the Hotel de Glace. Constructed afresh every year, this amazing ice structure is decorated with glittering ice sculptures and furnished using blocks of ice (including the beds, but they're well insulated). The bar, made of ice, serves drinks in glasses made of ice. After dark you can enjoy an outdoor sauna under the twinkling stars. Even if you don't stay here, it's worth calling in for a drink on one of the daytime tours (Hoteldeglace-canada.com).

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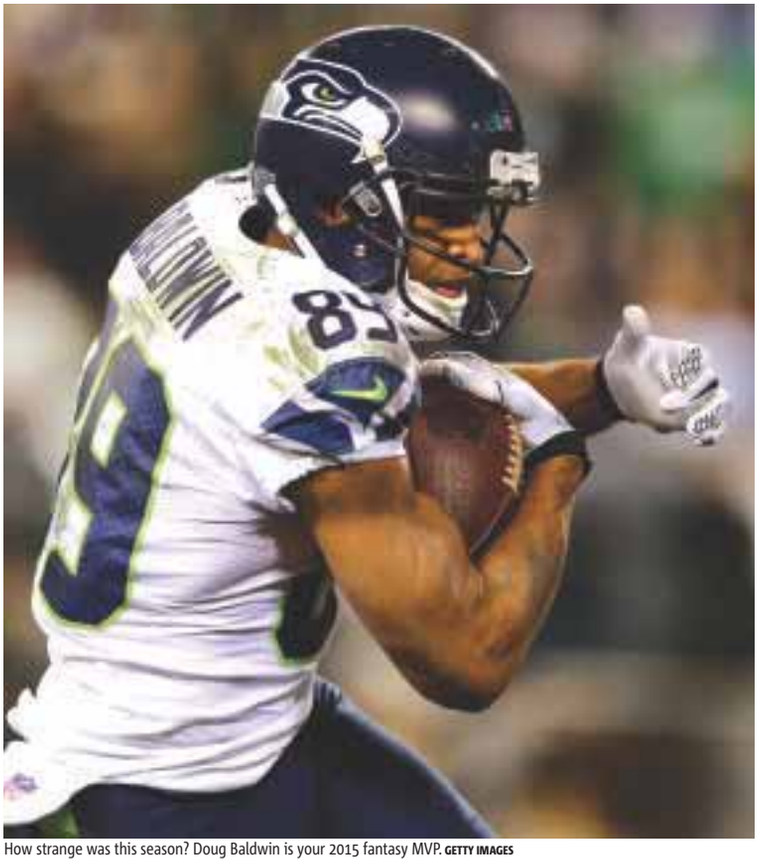

How strange was this season? Doug Baldwin is your 2015 fantasy MVP. GETTY IMAGES

THE 2015 FANTASY FOOTBALL AWARDS

ADAM LEVITAN

FANTASY SPORTS

Adam Levitan is a Fantasy Sports columnist for Metro US. He is also a DraftKings analyst and co-host of The Daily Fantasy Football Edge podcast. @AdamLevitan

If you're still alive in fantasy football, congratulations are in order. Every year in the NFL is chaotic, but the wild swings in value and devastating injuries made this season especially odd. The active and strategic owner was the winning one.

With the holidays upon us and lineups setting themselves for Championship Week, it's a good time to hand out some hardware. The 2015 Fantasy Football Awards:

MVP: Doug Baldwin — The 189-pound Baldwin somehow scored 10 touchdowns in the four games between Weeks 12 and 15. If you had him, you made your Super Bowl. It doesn't get much more valuable than that.

Biggest Bust: DeMarco Murray — He didn't get hurt like other first-round busts (Le'Veon Bell, Jamaal Charles, Marshawn Lynch). DeMarco was simply the third-best back on his own team and became literally unusable in fantasy down the stretch.

Sleeper of the Year: Allen Robinson — Casual players stuck their nose up at taking a Jaguars wideout in the latter part of the mid-rounds. Sharp players pounced on a special talent with huge opportunity. Robinson is fantasy's No. 5 WR.

Most Overhyped: Joseph Randle — Everyone was excited to get the starting running back behind one of the game's best offensive lines. We failed to ask if the volatile Randle was good enough physically or strong enough mentally to handle it.

Waiver Add of the Year: DeAngelo Williams — A parade of running backs came off the wire to play pivotal roles. DeAngelo was a surprisingly spry workhorse in one of the game's best offenses.

Most Painful Injury: Thomas Rawls — Savvy owners stashed Rawls as he beat out Christine Michael/Robert Turbin. They waited out Marshawn Lynch's injury. And just when the big payoff was coming, the talented Rawls broke his ankle.

Mr. Over the Hill: Calvin Johnson — Megatron was exposed as being over the hill at age 30, recording one 100-yard game all year and dipping under 14 yards per catch for the first time in his career. He'll be a big name, overvalued game in drafts next year.

3 Things to watch for as Giants face Vikings

New York hopes to keep its playoff dreams alive this weekend.

TONY WILLIAMS
@TBone8
sports@metro.us

By the time the Giants and Vikings face off for their prime-time Sunday affair, Big Blue's fate could already be decided.

The NFC East-leading Redskins (7-7) will have already played the Eagles (6-8) on Saturday night, and if Washington dumps Philly, the Giants (6-8) will have been officially eliminated from playoff contention.

They can't worry about what they can't control, so head coach Tom Coughlin will need to still have them ready to play, regardless of what they'll already know.

Metro takes a look at the key storylines to follow Sunday (8:30 p.m., NBC).

What to watch for:

1 Can Eli shoulder the load?

Statistically, Eli Manning is enjoying a career season in the second campaign under offensive coordinator Ben McAdoo. The way Manning has grasped the complicated offense and has boosted his already-elite status is staggering. If only he played in this system his entire career, Manning's legacy may be thought of even higher than it already is. He's coming off a streak in which he's thrown four touchdowns in each of the last two games, and has notched 3,900 yards, 32 touchdowns and just 11 interceptions on the year. Those are solid numbers, if not Pro Bowl-level numbers. He'll need to be even better in Minnesota, though, if the Giants are to have any chance of upsetting a Vikings squad that is also playing with a bit of desperation. If he's not up to the task, the game could get even uglier than last week's start against the Panthers.

Eli Manning and the Giants desperately need a win Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

2 Possible shootout?

Manning's counterpart, Teddy Bridgewater, can be streaky, as his recent month of play has showed. He's coming off — easily — his best statistical day of the season, when he torched the Bears for 231 yards, four passing touchdowns, and one rushing score. The previous week against the Cardinals he had 335 yards passing. But Bridgewater can also be forced into costly mistakes and head-scratching performances, as the two previous games before his recent hot streak confirmed (118 and 174 yards passing, respectively). Whichever Bridgewater shows up could determine the outcome. The Giants' secondary has been porous this season, allowing 308.4 yards per game, including eight games this season in which an opposing quarterback threw for over 300 yards. If they allow Bridgewater to remain hot, the skies could be filled with footballs Sunday night.

3 Vikings' running game looking to make Big Blue black and blue

Star running back Adrian Peterson will be in the lineup, despite his ailing ankle. Vikings head coach Mike Zimmer deemed Peterson "good to go" during his conference call with the New York media. Anyone who faces the Giants' run defense should be good to go, though, as Big Blue is yielding 4.1 yards per carry and allowing 114.6 rushing yards per game. Peterson has been stifled some recently, as he's been held under 70 rushing yards and only scoring once in the past three games, but that's likely due to the recent hot streak by Bridgewater — and opposing defenses stacking the line of scrimmage and daring the young passer to beat them. But if Peterson is anywhere near 100 percent, it's safe to say Zimmer will look for his prized running back to carry the load on offense. If the Vikings find a way to gain that balance and get the good version of Bridgewater to pair with Peterson, the Giants' season will essentially end at TCF Bank Stadium.

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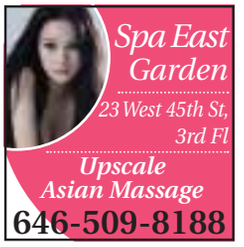

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NOTICE OF FORMATION of REI Golden Key LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secy. of State of New York (SSNY) on 09/09/2015. Office location: Queens County. SSNY is designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to the LLC c/o 31-72 31st Street, Apt. 3i, Astoria, NY 11106. Purpose: any lawful activity.

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a license, Number 1291254, for Beer & Wine has been applied for by the undersigned to sell Beer & Wine at retail in a Restaurant under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 142 W. 72nd Street, New York, NY 10023, for on-premises consumption. Wagamama Inc.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a license, Number 1291187, for On Premise Liquor has been applied for by the undersigned to sell Liquor, Wine & Beer Wine at retail in a Restaurant under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 157 2nd Ave., New York, NY 10003 for, on-premises consumption. Wen Zi Inc.

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a license, Number 1290362, for Beer & Wine has been applied for by the undersigned to sell Beer & Wine at retail in a Restaurant under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 40-20 Junction Blvd. Corona, NY 11368, for on-premises consumption. Skyline Corp. d/b/a Los Tres Potrillos.

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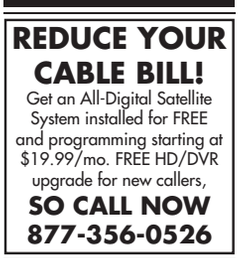
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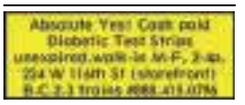

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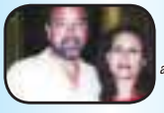

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3	A	F	T	Y	F
4	C	E	T	E	L
5	A	R	Y	N	I

1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

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QUIZ QUEST

Nixon	Reagan	Obama
Eisenhower	JOHN F KENNEDY (photo clue)	Truman
Lincoln	Washington	Ford
Carter	GEORGE W BUSH (photo clue)	Clinton
Buchanan	Jefferson	Cleveland

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All the answers to the clues are in the boxes, either as a word or picture. Solve all the clues and cross off the boxes. One word will be left over. This is the mystery answer.

Clues:

- His inauguration was the first ever televised nationally
- Born in 1743, he was the third of ten children
- The only president to serve two non-consecutive terms
- At 93 years and 165 days, he was the longest-lived of all presidents
- Nobel Peace Prize recipient in 2002
- The last president born in the 18th century
- The only president to resign from office
- Prior to his presidency, he served three terms in the Illinois Senate
- The only president of Roman Catholic faith
- John Adams succeeded this man as president
- Jelly beans are widely associated with this president
- He was born in Texas on October 14, 1890
- Decision Points is the title of a memoir released by this president
- The first Democrat since Franklin D Roosevelt to be elected twice

metro.us/crossword

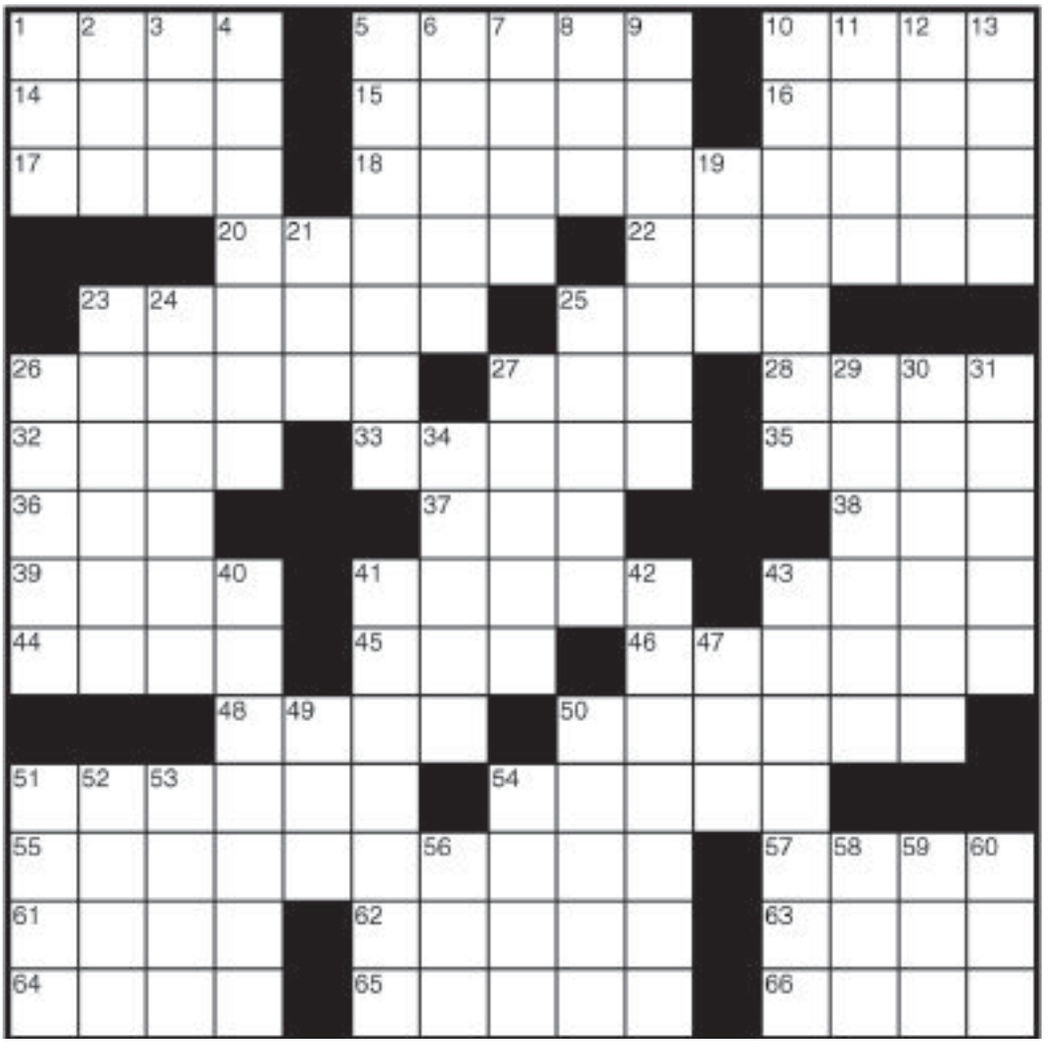
Across

1 Wine served warm
5 Shoot-'em-up
10 Warehouse pallet
14 Presently
15 Be loud, as a radio
16 Mandlikova of tennis
17 Biting fly
18 Ocean deep (2 wds.)
20 Shaman's quest
22 Overlords
23 Huge frights
25 Find in the dark
26 Very strong
27 Tiny legume
28 Basilica area
32 Authorizes
33 Parboil
35 Dove's shelter
36 Ms. Hagen of films
37 Cowhide puncher
38 — es Salaam
39 Wis. neighbor
41 Cool
43 103, to Pliny
44 Mountain refrain
45 Wabash loc.
46 Magnetism
48 Winter Olympics event
50 Puts out vapor
51 "I" trouble?
54 Lamprey hunter
55 Yuletide remnant (2 wds.)
57 Classes
61 Lands in "la mer"
62 Hits dead-center
63 Cheek dampener
64 Fling
65 Ringlet
66 Vacillate (hyph.)

Down

1 Droop
2 Sothern or Blyth
3 RV haven
4 Chants
5 Expresses disapproval
6 Ladd and Alda
7 Hebrew letters
8 Historical period
9 Good-as-new tire
10 Wood finish
11 Renowned "Citizen"
12 Price hike (abbr.)
13 Dit opposites
19 Wish undone
21 Max opposite
23 Lyrical
24 Staple, perhaps
25 Chops down
26 Old-fashioned writer
27 Handled clumsily
29 Dais
30 Some flights
31 Uncanny
34 Judy of "Laugh-In"
40 Most sacred
41 -- of one's imagination
42 Bareheaded
43 Gemstone feature
47 1865 yielder
49 Admiral's org.
50 Hawks
51 Saga
52 — monster
53 Singles
54 McClurg of sitcoms
56 Hearing aid?
58 Tolstoy's name
59 Bandleader — Kyser
60 Marquee notice of yore

FOR THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S PUZZLES, **metro.us/games**



games

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Aries Stick to a budget. Say little and do a lot. You'll face controversy if you get together with people who think differently than you.

Taurus Conversations with colleagues or discussions about the future look promising. A romantic evening will ensure future happiness.

Gemini Your blatant honesty will bring about sudden and irreversible changes between you and the person you spar with.

Cancer Whether you host a get-together to spend time with friends, your sparkling company will make a difference to those you encounter.

Leo Your heart is in the right place, but not everyone will be happy. Offering to help someone in need will be gratifying, but could miff a friend.

Virgo Get out and socialize. The conversations you have will lead to unusual banter. Keep your money in a safe place.

Libra Problems at home will lead to bad decisions or unexpected changes. Keep the peace until a better opportunity comes along.

Scorpio Make some home improvements. An offer to help someone in need will be returned with an unexpected favor.

Sagittarius You may feel like you should take on everyone else's problems, but you are best off not meddling.

Capricorn Anyone trying to convince you to be impulsive is best avoided. Listen to the opinions of others with interest, but do your own thing.

Aquarius Children and family activities will highlight your day. A short trip will result in an interesting change of events. Instigate and welcome change.

Pisces Speak up, and do your best to put others at ease. Your kindness will make a difference. A little romance will bring you closer. **EUGENIA LAST**

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easy

				3		2	4	
	8	5			2			
		3			4		5	6
			1	7		5		2
		2		5		3		
5		7		2	9			
6	7		5			4		
			6			1	3	
	4	9		8				

hard

6					5	9		
	5		1	8				2
3		1			2			
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9			4		8			1
	7		6					5
			2			5		3
5				1	3		7	
		7	5					8

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